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**NAINA PILLAI-THE TRAILBLAZER**

A 'full-bench suite' — not of judicial genre, but a musical 'ensemble'. What wafted through was not an ensemble music or orchestrated blend of melody and rhythm as one would jump to conclude. It was a vocal recital in pure Karnatak tradition with as many as seven accompaniments. Again, the accompanists were not mute followers, playing to a rehearsed sequence or to the sway of the baton. They were giants in their respective fields, geniuses each one of whom carved a niche for himself. Govindaswamy Pillai, Azhaganambi Pillai, Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai, Sundaram Iyer, Venu Chettiar, Seetharamayya, and Pakkiri Pillai — all trend-setters in their fields, viz., Violin, Mridangam, Kanjira, Ghatam, Dholak, Morsing and Konnakol respectively. Yes, a full-bench of titans of musical tradition. And the performer *par excellence* was Kanchipuram Subramania Pillai, better known as Naina Pillai who blazed a new trail in Pallavi tradition in the first decades of this century.

He could well be called a father figure (Naina) in Pallavi Sampradaya. There was no second opinion about the profundity of his knowledge. In his hands Raga bhava and Laya propensity fused as one. Sahitya and Sangeeta blended with bhava.

**PERFORMER NONPAREIL**

He might have been a task master, a terror, to the accompanists as his impeccable artistry and imagination kept even the percussion wizards on tenterhooks. And quite some vidwans abhor-

red accompanying him. But he is never known to have sacrificed music at the altar of Laya. However complex the Tala and whatever Gati he wove, there was a Sarvalaghu ease, a spontaneity in negotiation. Only the other day Tirumuruga Kripananda Variar recalled with nostalgia Naina Pillai's full-bench cutcheri where music flowed like mountain stream.

There was a sustained Sadhaka that inspired Naina into fresh avenues and naturally he expected the same of his co-artistes. He never censured them openly, though a word of praise he never hesitated to utter when occasion demanded. But he wouldn't admit anything unfinished or offhanded in the offering to the muse.

Musing over his music, Sangeetha Kalanidhi D. K. Pattammal has gone emotional and rapturous in her interview to SRUTI and there could be no better evaluation of the master's music than quoting DKP who, one may say, was one of the greatest benefactors, though not a direct disciple.

"How can I describe the impact of Naina Pillai's incomparable music! Words are inadequate ... indeed. As I talk, I see him in my mind's eye, seated majestically amidst ... a whole range of accompaniments, a full bench as this was known those days .... I do not know if any other musician would dare to perform with a full bench, often of giants .... There was a carping criticism by a few who were not comfortable with Laya, even during his lifetime, the charge being that the rhythmical fireworks destroyed and drowned the emotional element ...."



In fact, one of the resolutions passed at the All-India Music Conference held in 1927 at Madras (which gave birth to The Music Academy, Madras) said that "... too many accompaniments mar the effect of musical entertainments ..." and it therefore should be restricted to "one violin or any other stringed instrument and one Mridangam or any other Tala instrument capable of being tuned to the Sruthi." Naina Pillai was one of the musicians present at the conference! Incidentally, mark the word 'entertainment'. Concerts even as early as the 'twenties where colossi strode the scene, were termed 'entertainment'!

But DKP vouched for the emotional content in Naina's music. "I can say with certitude", she observed, "as one with deep attention and interest that ... his music touched the soul".

#### UNIQUE MUSICAL MEET

Nothing unusual in DKP going emotional about Naina, for in him she found an inspiration, a source to learn, collect and assimilate her repertoire. The Tyagaraja Utsava that Naina conducted every year after the Aradhana at Tiruvaikyaru was ever an opportunity in a big way. Musicians great and small, asthana vidwans and amateur performers, considered it a privilege to sing at the venue. To many a fresh talent it was a launchpad for they could be noticed by the vidwans who had assembled there and whose acceptance was very essential for them to proceed on the profession. To students and young performers it was a rare occasion to listen to a number of stalwarts at one place and thus learn and assimilate.

#### A METAMORPHOSIS

For one who frittered away his childhood, pampered as he was by his fami-

ly, he being the only male child among three sisters who affectionately called him "Naina", and one who played truant from school and was a nuisance around, it was nothing short of a miracle that made Naina a musical phenomenon. It was a sanyasi, the story goes, well-versed in music who brought about this metamorphosis in the lad. Against his perseverance Naina had no escape. The arresting vistas of rhythm and swaras the sanyasi opened up were irresistible. And once caught in the spell, it almost became a passion, a Vairagya, with Naina to pursue the art. He started practising long hours at the temple yard. Music was in his blood. Atmosphere at home was congenial. It needed only his assiduous application.

His home was a veritable abode of music (Kalaikkoodam). His aunt Dhanakoti was a musical luminary, and many vidwans visited their house, sang and taught the sisters (his mother Kamakshi dueted with her elder sister Dhanakoti) and Naina could drink from this nectar. Of course, to blossom into an artiste, toil was needed. His voice in early stages wasn't very communicative, we are told. But with determination he cultivated it. Came a turning point with a concert of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, which inspired his musical sensitivity, fired his imagination and solidified his determination. Konerirajapuram became his model and Naina set himself to specialise in Pallavi singing.

#### PHASED-OUT SADHAKA

A well phased-out sadhaka session with accompaniments became a daily routine in which, Sethur Sundaresa Bhattar and Akhilesvara Iyer played violin and mridangam respectively. In

a 6 to 7-hour sadhaka session Pallavi in 35 Talas in Pancha Nadais and in as many as 4 to 32 Kalais with varying laya intricacies, were practised. He composed his own Pallavi and dedicated to his Ishta Devata, Lord Muruga. His penchant for laya intricacies and swaraprastharas was such that he would not agree to sing at a concert where Swaras were prohibited.

There is a view that voluble swara singing is a damper on voice control and cultivation, especially in Karvai and negotiating vilamba pace. However Naina seemed to have been an exception. He specialised in Madhyamakala singing as his voice texture would not yield to modulation or subtle brikkas. Yet his range was from Mandara Madhyamam to Tara Madhyamam with consistent vitality and 'Ghanam' and that managed the rest.

#### RARE REPERTOIRE, RAGAS

Though specialised in Pallavi, Naina was not starved of kriti repertoire. In fact, he had the finest, many rare and extensive repertoire of Tyagaraja Kritis, Tiruppugazh etc. Syama Sastri's compositions were his heirloom as his mother and aunt were disciples of Kachi Sastri, the great-grandson of Syama Sastry. Naina learnt and acquired a vast treasure of Tyagaraja Kritis from Jalatarangam Ramanayya Chettiar who belonged to the sishya parampara of Venkataramana Bhagawathar, one of the four prime disciples of Tyagaraja.

Chettiar, a fine vocal teacher, saw in Naina a true propagator of his style. His own voice was foggy and could not easily reach the student, but Naina perceived every nuance. Chettiar was

proud that "Naina alone could capture every swara that emanated from my voice" and taught him hundreds of the Saint's Kritis.

Also Naina's passion for music made him a perfectionist in every aspect. He mastered Tamil and Telugu and none could excel him singing the kritis with right accent and clear bhava. It was this characteristics which impelled, we are told, Veena Dhanammal, a close friend of the family to send her granddaughters, Brinda and Mukta, to train under him. The two giants were close in musical exchanges and learnt many compositions from each other.

Not content with rare kritis and Pallavi singing alone, he turned his attention to rare Ragas too. Having had the treasure-trove, he brought to limelight Ragas like Vagadeeswari (*Paramath-mudu*), Amritavahini (*Sriramapaadama*), Jayantasena (*Vinatasuta vahana*), Rudrapriya (*Amba Paradevate*) Mandari, Manirangu, Poornachandrika ... the number is endless ... *Heccharigagara* (Yadukula Kambhoji) was 'promoted' from Bhajana session to the concert platform. He set a trend of Niraval-Swara singing to Tiruppugazh which were in intricate Talas. This certainly would sharpen one's layagnana.

A true musician that he was, he often polished his rare gems and Ragas consulting Govindaswamy Pillai who was an authority on this. Naina Pillai worshipped music and every concert was an offering to God. He would never tolerate anyone insulting music. Especially audience restlessness and their moving in and out of the pandal would irritate him. He would react sharp with



his musical dart, *Mariyadakaadayya* (Bhairavam). If the hint did not register, he would be ready with the retribution, *Buddhiraadu* (Sankarabharanam). How could the rasikas be still indifferent?

And he never agreed to recording his songs. Constricting alapana, kriti, swaras or Pallavi in time bound capsule, he considered as choking music. His convictions about musical renditions and his generosity — going all out to help musicians and his disciples made him a pauper, and he would not accept charity nor mortgage his music.

He had no fascination for felicitation. At a recital at Chidambaram, when Vaidyanatha Pillai who accompanied him on Kanjira had organised for a felicitation, a conferment of a title on him, Naina politely declined to accept. The very venue of recital was sacred, he said, and added that he would rather seek the blessings of the Lord of Chidambaram, Nataraja.

It was 1932, Naina had performed at a wedding in the famous singer-thespian S. G. Kittappa's house. So much exhilarated was he about the 6-hour concert that turned out top-class. The accompanists Gopalakrishna Iyer (Violin), Ramadas Rao (Mridangam), Dakshinamoorthy Pillai (Kanjira) and Pakkiri Pillai (Konnakkol) — all played as one man. Back home, at Kanchi he

exclaimed, "such a performance — it had not happened so far, it may not, ever .... Such exhilaration is none too healthy to us, performers!" Was it a foreboding? Within a year he was afflicted with the disease and within the next it claimed his life too.

He left behind a legacy of musical repertoire, Ragas and disciples too. His house was a musical institution. Sarali to Pallavi resounded there throughout the day. Daughter Neelayathakshi taught at primary level. Wife Kuppammal trained the women students. Mother Kamakshi Ammal too never rested from her teaching stints. And Naina was, of course, a towering teacher, a true 'Naina' who offered food, medical aid, everything to them.

Among his disciples, besides the sisters from the Dhanammal family, Viliambakkam Narasimhachari, Sangeeta Kalanidhi Chittoor Subramania Pillai, Rudrakoti Mudaliar, Yazhpanam Kadirvel Pillai, Kanchi Sarangapani Chettiar, Tirupparkkadal Srinivasa Iyengar, Sethur Sundaresa Bhattar, Krishnaswami Iyengar were notable.

In this year of the birth centenary of 'Naina' SHANMUKHA pays its tribute to the Titan who enriched the Karnatak tradition.

SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

## LASTING IMPACT OF TWO STYLES

By  
S. RAMACHANDRAN

**A** look at the cultural profile of South India clearly points to the amazing influence of classical music on the middle and upper strata of society. Over the period commencing from the forties, in particular, it has been an uninterrupted and growing process. Government institutions and private schools run by professional musicians grooming out talented performers in music are galore. A special artistic sensibility oriented to music has, as though, come to be elemental to the growing children in the general social set-up. In this context, the influence of two stalwarts who had dominated the field of Karnatak music during the mid-decades of the century, is significant.

### TWO BRILLIANT PERSONALITIES

One of them was the late G. N. Balasubramaniam (6.1.1910 — 1.5.1965) and the other, the late Madurai Mani Iyer (25.10.1912 — 8.6.1968). Both have bequeathed two distinct styles where sweetness, erudite refinement and elegance have worked their way into a splendid amalgam. Whereas the earlier musicians had, no doubt, set a trend, each in his own orthodox way, their listeners were not any more than what might be described as the chamber music audience. But with the advent of G. N. Balasubramaniam (popularly known as GNB) and Madurai Mani, a remarkable glitter or fresh air had come to be felt. Their impact was so great that listeners thronged in thou-

sands for their concerts. The secret of their technique was that they could produce a characteristic 'thrill' in the melodies that they handled. A sense of involvement and rapport with their accompanists had excellently combined in their musical rendition contributing to their unique stature and popular appeal.

### TALENT AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

For any musician to make a successful impact, the sweetness cum grandeur of a voice duly cultured is a basic requisite. An excellent aesthetic perception contributing to a distinctive style at presentation is yet another point in favour. Both the aspects were so proportionately blended with these maestros that as they handled the art, it was nothing short of a symbiotic accord with the audience. With GNB a well-cultivated voice that could negotiate any speed and a rhythmic verve at rendering were an unquestioned asset. As for Madurai Mani, music was as though, a built-in arrangement in his voice and a distinguishing feature of his heredity. His uncle Pushpavanam Iyer of the twenties, it is said, had the gift of a voice literally surfeit in honey. Both GNB and Madurai Mani had in them a keen discriminating sense to sift the chaff from the grain. In the process, they could capture a correct 'feel' of the audience and provide a concert thrilling in effect and resistant to the rubbing of time.



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A common ground between these two maestros was the 'sarvalagu' element in their singing style. Although a term often talked about in professional parlance, it would not be difficult for the layman to precisely identify its position. It is the never-failing rhythmic beats that sustain the concert flow securing in the process an equipoise, an alignment and well-gearred tempo.

In Karnatak music concerts, the Kritis make an exclusive format where the lyrical text is arranged in the manner of an ordered sequence like Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. It is unique to this pattern in the system that rhythm receives a fine treatment at the hands of the artiste. Rhythm and melody move warp and woof into a fine musical texture. Creative swara singing comes to be handled with artistry and erudite workmanship in the manner of a scheme where the percussionist plays an equal role and not that he merely chooses to maintain just the time-beats. In fact, the percussionist, while keeping the rhythmic time, proves himself a creative artiste in his own right on par with the main musician. Thus the general concert effect achieves an aura and verve which is distinctive to the Karnatak system.

**LIFE INTO DRY BONES**

In music, as in the realm of literature, the present is an evolution from the ancestral past and it contributes very much to moulding the posterity as well. Anything new in the artistic professionalism could be traced to its roots somewhere in the past. While style in singing is a manifestation in the manner of fresh shoots or spectacular blossoms, the nourishment, has always been drawn from the musical excellences

and stalwarts of the past. This obviously explains tradition. While GNB conformed to this tradition in musical practice, his was neither a slavish imitation in any sense, nor an arrogant revolt. He fused an intellectual power into his artistic style which at once elicited admiration and approval from all quarters. In fact, he paved the sinuous corridor to modernity in the musical art and appreciation. In the development of his style of singing he remarkably administered life into the dry bones of the conservative school. While retaining the energising force, spirit and sincerity of the stalwarts of the earlier period, GNB projected an idiom of his own so as to suit the needs of contemporary taste. The need of the time was a verve and wholesomeness in rhythm at the musical concert. His was a currency of musical richness and buoyancy of spirits which clicked on to stay permanent ever since.

GNB believed that music as a performance on the stage had its own right of perspective. The musician here is required to compress his skills into a limited time span, a limitation imposed by changing social and cultural trends and attitudes of audience, in particular. Karnatak system does not consist in mere Raga elaboration in the manner of a desultory free-lance with many a repetitive phrase. It is not just a time-consuming exercise either, in the name of creativity. The compositions have to be handled and elaborated carefully through Sangatis and Niraval. Apart from the aesthetic 'feel', the element of Bhakti has to find a place, as due. Where this involvement is absent, the recital would be insipid. This excellence or 'bhava' as is familiarly known



is the emotional power which the musician fuses into his performance. It helps him create an effect of transcendence both while articulating the musical effects of the Raga handled and also while projecting the theme in the Kritis of the composers.

#### PROPORTION AND VARIETY

GNB fashioned out a characteristic sense of proportion for a musical concert. His grasp of Karnatak rhythm indicated the extensive repertoire he had acquired. His conception of Sangathis while rendering a song pointed to his original artistic base. One could feel a psychological stimulus working up in a reflex, while listening to his Niraval or as he concentrated on the Sangathis improvised one after the other. Embellishments best suited to the structure and emotional content of the songs were his standard. Sparkling musical phrases developed to an impressive crescendo were his popular stock in trade, besides titillating and sensuous Thukkada forming the concluding part of his concert. His Swaraprasthara was prolific, finely cut to precision. Arrestingly, he would slice in at every letter-space of the Tala segment in an air of confidence and aplomb to denote his mastery at rhythm. Again, in effortless abandon he would choose, skip and place emphasis at appropriate Swarasthanas providing a spectacular output for the cogniscenti and lay listener.

#### FINE VALUES IN LIFE

GNB kept an open mind to absorb the fine strands and perfection wherever available in the professional field and integrate them to advantage. Significantly, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Nadaswaram maestro T. N. Raja-

ratnam Pillai were two distinct influences on him.

As a person, he was swayed by the conviction that what is good, wholesome and aesthetically appealing should be assimilated. It was this background that prompted him to openly declare his reverential submission to the late Bade Gulam Ali Khan before a crowded gathering in Madras. GNB was emotionally overcome at the latter's 'nadopasana' and dedication to the art. While imparting lessons to his students and fans, his attitude was something far from overbearing. He had always a word of encouragement for his disciples, budding artistes and accompanists participating on a common platform.

#### HONEYED VOCALISM

Madurai Mani, the other stylist, had a very natural gift of sweetness in voice which straightaway touched the heart-strings of the audience. Any Raga at his hands assumed a completeness of form straight without any effort or pedantic articulations. So naturally cut out in musical tune throughout, one wondered if ever his voice had failed him in his concerts. His Swaraprasthara followed the precise equestrian trots. Noticeably, his creative faculty at this had been influenced by Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis. It was as though a straight dialogue with the audience that they very naturally kept the time beats along with the musician and emotionally becoming a part of his domain. He believed that style of singing should be simple and straight in appeal. He therefore eschewed intellectualised frills and ostentatious scholarship. His sensitive style and creativity were influenced by the titan Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and the Nadaswaram

maestro Rajaratnam Pillai. Once into the concert hall, it was difficult for his listeners to get out anywhere in the middle. So absorbing was Madurai Mani's music.

#### SIMPLICITY AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

By nature, Madurai Mani was simple and not given to any hypocrisy. He believed that music was essentially divine and was particular in observing auspicious moments, days, etc., according to Hindu calendar. Such songs of the Trinity of Karnatak music as suited to the occasion and adaptable to the strength and muscle of his voice were handled by him in facile grace. True to his innocent nature, he was prepared to accept anything that was good and

musically appealing. He believed that concert was a good team work by all participating artistes. Right enough, his nature was repellent to conceit.

By sheer lustre of their singing style, both GNB and Madurai Mani set a popular trend. They shaped a good dimension for the aesthetic sensibilities of two generations. No doubt, their contribution to the cultural ambience is something to be fondly conjured with. Significantly in the lines of the English poet :

"Blessings be with them and eternal praise,  
Who gave us nobler lives and nobler cares —  
The poets who on earth have made us heirs  
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays".

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# SULALITHA NRITYA—SULADI PRABANDHA

By

LALITHA SRINIVASAN

Musical compositions of any and all types have been denoted in India, under the generic name of Prabandha. One such Prabandha is Suddha Suda. The Suddha Suda strictly conformed to their theoretical prescriptions. The Salaga Suda were a distinct group of special compositions that were restricted to localised usage. These Salaga Suda have evolved into Suladis. Salaga Suda Prabandhas rate among the most ancient yet sophisticated musical forms of India. Bharatha described it in his *Natya Shastra* in the 2nd century B.C.

Salaga Suda must have been well known and practised in India and especially in Karnataka since very early times, as it is described by Someshwara in 1130 A.D., Haripala in 1175 and Parshva Deva in 1200, before Sharnagadeva did so in his *Sangeetha Rathnakara*, attributed to the 13th century. He was the first one to present it systematically in a theoretical context. Later Kallinatha in 1440, Venkatamakhi in 1650 and Tulaja in 1730 have referred to these Prabandhas.

The term Suda is not found in any other Dravidian language except in Kannada. It connotes a group of certain song types, and derives from Sul — meaning 'to sound', which occurs in a predetermined order, indicating that these songs were sung in a prescribed

order and in Talas which were displayed only through the sounded beats in them.

The Suladis in their present form were procreated and propagated by the saint composers of the Haridasakuta of Karnataka, during the time of the Great Vijayanagar Empire between 14th and 16th centuries. Between 15th and 17th centuries, Suladis underwent changes in their literary theme. Until then they were sung on practically any theme, ranging from physical love to divine praise and now they were exclusively in praise of God or for the social and moral upliftment of individuals. The Haridasas of Karnataka were directly responsible for this.

The second major change came with the shift in the application of the Talas to these Prabandhas from *desi* variety to the conventional seven in Karnatak music.

The musicologists of the 17th and 18th centuries have described the Suladi Nritya in detail. Chatura Damodara, 1620, was probably the first one to define it in his *Sangeetha Darpana*. The technical details he has referred to can be worked into precision with the help of texts like *Sangeetha Ratnakara*, *Lasyaranjana* and Ashoka Malla's *Nrithodhyaya*. According to Chatura Damodara, Suladi is a dance performed in

different tempos set in the seven Suladi Talas or Alankara Talas, employing sophisticated footwork, hand gestures and body movements.

The Suladi Nritya had thus attained classical status in the early 17th century. Other writers like Veda, Devanabhatta, etc., have also described Suladi Nritya after Damodara.

## SULADI IN NIRTANA SEVA

Suladi is a unique contribution of Karnataka to Indian music and dance. The Nritya or dance is specific in its form. The Suladis were quite popular till recent times, in the whole of South India and in other regions, where Karnataka rulers, musicians and composers flourished. It is very clear that the Suladis have had a firm tradition and history both in music and dance in Karnataka and other parts of South India. The potentiality for dance is obvious in their remarkable rhythmic variety and temporal structure. It is indeed probable that Nirtana Seva of the Haridasas was conducted to the accompaniment of Suladi singing.

As Devendra calls it a "Suddha Paddati" as distinct from *Desi Paddati*, it is obvious, that Suladis were a part of traditional repertoire by the 17th century in South India. It is also understood that such Prabandhas were danced before the Tanjore Quartet set a pattern for Sadir cutcheri.

Thus the Chayalaga of Bharatha's days have changed to Salaga Suda and Suladi over the centuries. Now I have made it bold to call it 'Sulalitha Nritya' as it incorporates a good amount of Lasya in its structure. As Karnataka is struggling to find its own identity in

the field of dance, I have made an effort to revive and reconstruct what belongs originally to Karnataka, what is very much in our own language, and what is entirely our own to preserve and cherish.

To give a few technical details, the singing of Suladi also has a certain pattern and rules. The dance is highly stylised, as Damodara called it a "Suddha Paddati". The Sahitya is divided into Udgraha, Druva and Abhoga. Sometimes there is an Antara, a bridge between Druva and Abhoga. Some of these compositions are available at the Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Library along with the notations. I have chosen the one in Nata as I felt the lyrics were suitable for dance.

The composition, *Harinadeyadiralu*, in Nata has Ata Tala to begin with, to be sung in Vilamba Kala. It is supposed to be embellished by beautiful hand gestures. Next comes Roopaka in which the Udgraha and Abhoga are sung in Druta kala and the Dhruva is danced in Druta, Madhyama and Vilamba Kalas. The Matya Tala has Udgraha sung once, the Druva, 2, 3, or 4 times and Abhoga once. The dance concludes with a display of attractive hand poses. Soushtava is to be maintained. Triputa Tala is supposed to be scholarly in attitude and in Druta Kala. The Lasyanga, Kalasa along with attractive hand poses, are prescribed for Triputa Tala.

I must quote here the late Dr. V. Raghavan on 'Lasyanga'. "The Lasyangas of Bharata are thematic and constitute a regular sequence of the items of dance. The *Desi Lasyangas*, almost all of them, form an essay in criticism, pointing out the excellences which

The Central Sangeet Natak Akademy has given a grant to the author to reconstruct the Suladi Nritya.



should be the aim of the danseuse to achieve". Which refers to grace, gestulation, stance, finish, interim pauses etc. In fact the Desi Lasyangas are aesthetics and criticism of the art.

Such an emphasis on the graceful and aesthetic element in Suladis should justify the name 'Sulalitha Nritya', more ornamental and attractive though.

Coming to Ekatala Nritya, it should be in Druta kala interspersed with Bhraman movements. It must conclude with Alapa. The last stage in the Nata Suladi is in Misra Jhampa which is sung in Madhyamakala and it is to be danced in front with long strides and Kalasa.

To summarise, I have tried to study the technical details as thoroughly as possible and to reconstruct it in an authentic mode. I do realise there are

many gaps in knowledge and little understood portions, which I hope to rectify by the aid of more studies and scholars. My great desire was to bring out something particularly belonging to Karnataka and something very much in Kannada language alone! As a choreographer, I had to keep in mind that the dance should be palatable to the modern viewers. Hence instead of making it a solo number, I have choreographed it for four dancers.

As the dance composition was earlier set to Sadir mode of dancing, I had to study both the Marga and Desi Charis, Karnanas, Bhramaris etc., which the students had to practise like Adavus, of which only some we could project successfully. These old motifs have been woven along with Bharata Natyam Adavus to arrive at effective rhythmic passages to enrich the Nritta aspect of the composition.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF KATHAK IN MODERN TIMES\*

By

SUNAYANA

It is common knowledge that the art of story-telling was the origin of Kathak and that in days of yore professional story-tellers narrated the epics, mythologies etc., to the masses through lyrics, supplemented by subtle gestures and facial expressions. The venue was the temple yard and the medium — narration, music and mime. Naturally the story, the message and moral were conveyed more lucid and vivid.

#### SIMPLE ORIGIN

Reference to Kathakas could be found in ancient Sanskrit texts and in grammatical works too. Tulsidas has referred to them as 'conveying the sense of dance'. Panini in his *Siddhanta Kaumudi* laid down norms from which Kathak is derived. In essence Kathaka has been defined as story-teller, narrator of drama and a solo-performer. The emphasis here is on solo-performer because when Kathak developed as a classical art it was performed always solo. Now that Kathak has grown out of its soil and spread, many Desi-patterns have come into vogue. Yet if they were studied in detail one could perceive certain common

features of original Kathak in North India present in them.

With the advent of the Moghuls changes set in. They took the dance from temple to Durbar, and transformation followed in train, in respect of content, song-pattern and language. The shift from sombre temple environs to the Durbar hall detached it from the simple religious narrative it was and made it into a highly complex art. The original musical repertoire of the Dhru-pad and Keertans in Sanskrit and Brajbasha gave way to more sensuous Thumri, Dadra and Ghazal in Urdu, to suit the Moghul tenor.

Whilst it is true that Kathak became prominent during the Moghul rule, to attribute the dance form or to view it only in the settings of the Moghul court is inappropriate, for though changes had occurred as regards content, language etc., the way of treatment remained the same because 'Kathak is stylised form of what is natural.'

In the pre-Independence era Kathak was patronised by the princely states and they had their own court dancers. These dancers gained their coveted position after much hard work and

\*Based on extempore presentation at the Symposium on Dance at the Shanmukhananda Hall, on February 25 & 26, 1989.



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years of training under their Gurus. The kings who patronised them also were highly learned and sensitive to all art forms. More often they themselves were artistes and spent hours learning the finer nuances of arts.

Its development in a way had much to do with the size and response of the audience. It was a period when Kathak Dance was confined to the 'Mehfils' and 'Baithaks' where the audience was small but consisted of connoisseurs of art. They could understand the minute intricacies of technique and subtle nuances of Abhinaya. The atmosphere was homely and informal and a perfect rapport between the dance and the audience was established. The dancers on the other hand had devoted their life time for the development of their art and acquired such mastery over their medium that their performance was more an inspired one, a spontaneous rendition rather than a well-planned and rehearsed one.

The Kathak Gurus were not educated but thoroughly trained in the art. They were taught the grammar orally. Only they never made efforts to use them in their dance. They followed their own formula. The dance was more instinctive, Mudras came more natural and Abhinaya spontaneous. Spontaneity was the hallmark of Kathak then.

If a dancer chose to improvise a single composition or interpret a single line of a Pada (poem), the audience watched patiently and they applauded spontaneously. This encouraged the dancer to improvise and innovate the same differently. Thus his/her performance depended on what response he received from the audience.

The dancer appeared on the floor of the hall without much ado. One did not resort to gimmickry or restrict himself to stage etiquette. It was art that counted more. In illustration of this a performance by 75-year old Guru Biharilalji at Indore may be cited. It was quite a big gathering and the guru was dancing at one area of the audience with Ustad Nizammudin Khan and Azimuddin Khan, the Tabalachi and Sarangia respectively closely following him behind. He did the same number in other areas and resumed his original place to give it a finish. The audience were patient enough to wait and witness it from close quarters and little bothered about stage manners etc. And the artiste too made it extempore so that it never tired anyone. Thus the Kathak dance was an extempore and spontaneous art and it was this quality which put this dance in a class by itself and it acquired a charm of its own.

But the times have changed. We have all the amenities — of big halls, good acoustics, lighting arrangement etc. But the audience has no time or patience to watch a performance for hours. And also it is large and it mostly consists of laymen. What they want is a compact performance of a series of distinct numbers in which technical virtuosity as well as Abhinaya are equally displayed. And the spontaneity of the art of improvisation of Kathak is lost.

Padarthabhinaya — the different interpretations of a single word in a line, is a speciality of Kathak. The Kathak dancer's forte is Sanchari Bhava and with this he is able to weave many illusions — some realistic, some allegorical. In Kathak Satvik Abhinaya is important, which is subdued and not ex-



aggerated. With just a glance or a movement of the wrist the dancer can express volumes of emotions. In large halls these finer points cannot be seen.

It goes without saying that Kathak needs smaller audience where everyone can see the dancer's face clearly and appreciate finer nuances of the art. In fact, Kathak to start with, was performed in sitting posture. Slowly out of ecstasy the dancer must have stood up to dance and when in standing posture a few simple rhythmic steps naturally were dovetailed and in the Moghul times the same had acquired a complicated formula. Thus came a time after Independence when Kathak dancer started giving more emphasis on technical virtuosity, mostly Chakkars and Tattkar and Abhinaya became secondary. Also the Kathak dancer became conscious of the fact that in the present context the sequence of numbers in a performance and their presentation is important and therefore has to be changed to suit the present conditions.

There was only Mangalacharan earlier. Then Sthutis were brought in, then added Thats, Toras etc. Some educated dancers have done research work in the field of Raas and its relation to Kathak, some have tried to present it in a series of composed items, yet some others have tried to present themes which were not presented before in Kathak and are not restricted to Radha-Krishna themes. I myself have done research on the works of the Gurus of our Gharana, viz., the Jankiprasad Gharana and have presented some very old and extinct compositions on the stage. There is overall improvement in the field of technique and presentation.

The best thing which has happened to all types of dance is that it has got rid of the stigma attached to it. It has become part of society. Girls from respectable families have started taking it up as a profession. It is heartening to see that there are any number of dance schools all over the country and a vast number of gurus too, who impart training. There are private institutions and Institutes sponsored by the State and Universities. There are prescribed courses, full-time and part-time, ranging from a few months to Six years and leading to the award of certificates, Diplomas, Degrees. Many of the set-up have advisory committees, often studied with prestigious names. Pupils duly qualified are churned out every year.

All this presents a very happy picture and shows that Dance has improved considerably in recent years. But even after all this there are very few dancers who have taken it up as a profession and still fewer who have made it to the top. Of course, one cannot expect each and every student learning dance to become a professional stage-artist. But are the dance schools able to train students in such a way that they would form a part of the audience for the future? The schools are busy in teaching ready-made items and earning money. The girls opt for short stints to make it to the films or hold it as an extra qualification. These dance schools are not able to teach the art of appreciation, to give students enough knowledge to differentiate between good and bad. If they did we could have an enlightened audience and the dancer would be happy to perform before an audience who does not clap for the sake of courtesy at the end of

each item. The development of any classical art depends on many factors and one of them is an enlightened audience. Today the audience emphasis has shifted imperceptibly but totally from the dance to the dancer. By and large it is no longer concerned with the form of dance that is presented. Its concern is only who the dancer is, with the result that once a dancer reaches the top and is secure he/she can afford to do anything, be complacent, distort the technique, introduce innovations. The audience will coolly lap it all up. To reach the top is the goal of the dancer. And for this just talent, merit, hardwork etc., are of no avail. One has to have the added advantage of strong backing, contacts, PR, and one has also to learn to make compromises! Little wonder few dancers are able to make it to the top.

#### INNOVATIONS

Innovations have become the in-thing, the purpose being to only enhance visual appeal and tickle the palate. Ballets, group items, Thumri Mala with an accent on nritta and what not have caught the audience attention. In all these Satvik abhinaya has given place to exaggerated expression and dazzling nritta predominates.

Ballets are welcome addition. But group dances cannot have that depth as the solo has. There is plenty of repertoire in the Tradition and hence no need for any avante-garde. And the very soul of Kathak is in solo. It should not be allowed to sink in oblivion.

A dancer religiously goes through the training, hardwork. What next? She may have an arangetram if her parents can afford. Then for most of them that is the beginning of the end of their career. Not that the profession is so crowded that there is no room for

just one more; the problem is that there is no healthy audience for classical dance. People go to see the dance because the dancer is their neice or daughter of a good friend or she is very popular. Sponsors are concerned only with selling shows and not with promoting art. Everybody knows that classical dance shows do not go house full as cinema shows. So institutions having funds should come forward to present a good and deserving artiste and not look to the sale of tickets. Even in the performance of a famous dancer half the hall is filled with invitees, then, what is the harm in presenting a deserving artiste?

After years of struggle and hard work all that a dancer gets is frustration and disillusionment. He or she cannot live by performance alone. It is sad that taking up dancing as a career in India is a mistake. After years of devotion and hard work if the dancer cannot make her living by performance alone, can we say that dance has developed in India?

I personally think that unless some drastic measures are taken by the Government or educational bodies to create opportunities for the performing artistes and side by side educate the audience, the future of all classical art seems dark. What we need today is an organisation which with the help of Ministry of Culture could arrange lecture-demonstrations and art appreciation classes of all forms of classical dance and music in schools and colleges. This will help the younger generation to develop taste for and to appreciate the finer nuances of classical forms. Thus the artiste will have larger audience in the years to come. If Seminars like this can help to change the trend even by 10 per cent the art of dance will really reach greater heights.



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## EVOLUTION OF THUMARI\*

By  
THAKUR JAIDEVA SINGH

**T**humari is a form of Nritya music of which Abhinaya or acting is an indispensable component. I am using the word Nritya advisedly, for it is untranslatable in any other language. Its connotation would be clear in contrast with Nritta and Natya. Nritta is simply gestures and movements of definite patterns based on laya and tala. Nritya combines with this abhinaya which means communication of *bhava* and *rasa*, and may be roughly translated as acting. Natya is acting without laya and tala. In Nritta, there is neither song nor acting, but there are gestures, poses, and movements based on laya and tala. When this is combined with a song and abhinaya, it is called nritya.

So the essential constituents of nritya are : gestures and movements based on *tala*; song; and abhinaya or acting. In natya also there is abhinaya, but it is not associated with tala. Also the modes of abhinaya in nritya and natya are different. A song is not essential to natya, but dialogue, generally in prose, is absolutely essential. It represents certain *Patras* or *dramatis personae*, who act their parts. Nritta or nritya may be used in natya to embellish or heighten its effect. Nritya is not a constituent of natya, but an *avantara-padartha*, i.e., something introduced in it to heighten its effect, and nritta is utilized for embellishment (*shobhahetutvena*).

The English word 'dance' may be a synonym for nritta, but cannot do jus-

tice to the connotation of nritya. Some scholars have suggested 'representational dance' as an equivalent for nritya. French Indologists have suggested 'danse communicante or danse communicatrice' as equivalents for nritya.

### ORIGIN IN SHIVA'S DANCE

It is mentioned in Chapter IV of Bharata's *Natya Shastra* that Shiva suggested to Brahma as to how nritya could be utilized in natya :

*Mahageeteshu Chaivaarthansa  
myagevaabhineshyasi*

You may communicate by this means the emotional content of the songs that are sung in the purvaranga or the preliminary of a drama.

Abhinavagupta in his *Abhinava-bharati* quotes Kohala as giving the origin of nritya :

*Sandhyaayaam Nrityataha  
Shambhorbhatyaardro Naradaha  
Puras !*

*Geetavaanritripuronmaatham  
Tachchithastrathageetake !*

*Chakaaraabhinayam  
Preetastatastandum cha  
Sobraveeth !*

*Natyoktaabhinayenedam Vatsa  
Yojaya Tandavam !!*

\*Paper read at Akashwani Music Symposium during the annual Radio Sangeet Sammelan, 1962.



In times gone by, while Shiva was dancing in the evening, Narada, full of devotion, sang in front of him a song depicting the destruction of the demon Tripura. Shiva's mind was so much absorbed in the content of the song that he was delighted and acted out the content (chakaaraabhinayam). Then he said to his pupil, Tandula, "dear one, in future, combine with your dance the abhinaya that I have taught you in connection with natya so that the thought-content of a song could be communicated to others by acting."

Kohala is generally placed in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. He has used the word 'pura' i.e., in long past, in describing the origin of nritya which clearly shows that there was a long tradition behind it.

There were three factors in nritya — dance, song and acting, which Dasharupa testifies to :

*Bhaavaabhinayaheenam tu  
Nrityabhityabhidheeyate !*

*Rasabhavavyanjanaadiyuktam  
Nrityabhiteeryate !!*

It was not only abhinaya, but also music, both vocal and instrumental, which was an essential part of nritya. K. M. Varma says very rightly in his book 'Natya, Nritta and Nritya', "it may be further pointed out that almost all the time music is essential in nritya which is comparatively quite unimportant and optional too in the case of natya.

"NRITYA SANGITA"

The nritya (consisting of dance, song, and abhinaya) was used in the Purva-

ranga or the preliminaries of a drama, and Uparupakas, but it was also practised as an independent art by itself. Says K. M. Varma very succinctly, "Uparupakas may be covered by nritya but the word Uparupaka does not fully include all the possibilities of nritya, for the obvious reason that *if a single piece of song or verse, however short, is enacted or communicated with the help of a given technique, that would be nritya*". That it was practised as an independent art is evident from Kalidasa's drama *Malavikagnimitram* :

*Malavika — Upagaanam Kritva  
Chatushpada Vastu Gaayatih  
Durlabhaha Priyastasminbhava  
Hrudaya Niraasham  
Aho Upaangako me Prasphurati  
kimapi Vaamaha !*

*Esha sa Chisdrushtaha  
Kathamupanetavyo  
Naatha maam Paraadheenaam tvayi  
ganaya Satrushnaam !!*

And the poet adds — *Tato Yatharasa-bhinayati*. She sings a little alapana by way of prelude, and then a piece consisting of four parts. After this she acts out according to the rasa of the piece which was *Vipralambha Sringara*. Here the nritya was no part of a drama. It was an independent piece and the sentiment of the song was communicated by acting in consonance with the rasa of the piece.

That Malvika's performance involved dance, song, and acting is evident from the appreciation of Parivrajika who says :

*Yathadrishtam Sarvamanavadhyam !  
kutaha !*

*Agerantarnihita vachanaihi  
Soochitaha Samyaraarthaha  
Paadanyaaso  
Layamanugatastanmayatvam  
Raseshu !*

*Shaakhayonirmrudurabhinayasta  
dwikalpaanuvruttau  
Bhaavo Bhaavam nudati  
Vishayaadraagabandhaha sa eva !!*

"As witnessed by me, her performance was faultless." Why? Because of the — *artha* or sense. Sense of what? The commentator adds appropriately *Artha Geetaarthaha*. 'Artha' here means the 'sense of the song'; and the sense of the song was expressed by limbs in such a way that it appeared as if they embodied the very words of the song. The steps followed closely the musical timing. She became one with the *rasas* she gave expression to. The acting by means of the hand was very gentle and charming. Though in the successive stages of the abhinaya there was an expression of various emotions, the predominant sentiment was preserved throughout.

It is evident from this description that there was an art form which used dance and acting to communicate the sense of the song to the listeners. This may be called Nritya Sangita, used in purvaranga of Natya, in Uparupaka and also performed independently.

Kalidasa could not have given such a glowing description of it, if it had not got an honoured place in the musical systems of the country. The date of Kalidasa varies from scholar to scholar. Even if we suppose it to be 400 A.D., the art must have flourished about 200 years earlier in order to have acquired such prestige.

## DESI MUSIC

This Nritya (or abhinaya) Sangita was of two types — *marga* and *desi* or regional. Thumari was just a *desi* variety of this type of music and was prevalent in Uttar Pradesh and Vihara. From these, it spread to other parts of India. We have not got before us any example of its earlier form, but for the last 200 years or so, it has always been a song associated with dance and acting. It was practised mostly by Bais or dancing girls, Kathikas, and Bhands. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the correct word is Kathak or Kathika and not Katthaka. They sang and depicted in dance forms various Kathas, and hence got the name Kathak or Kathika which means a narrator. Both these words would be found in Apte's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. The word is derived from the root 'Kath', to narrate. It has nothing to do with Kattha or Catechu. Similarly the word 'banda' in the sense of jester or buffoon, is a Sanskrit word derived from the root 'bandh' — to jest. These are very old institutions and do not owe their origin to Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow, as some people wrongly suppose. He flourished in the 19th century and was deported to Calcutta in 1856. He surely patronised these arts and may have lent a hand in their development. He himself was a good composer of Thumaris.

Some scholars believe that the very word Thumari is derived from Thuma which means dance steps. Whatever the origin of the word, it has always been associated with dance and acting.

## TYPES OF THUMARIS

There are two types of Thumari — (1) Bol-bant-Ki-Thumari which is also



known as Bandish Ki Thumari and (2) Bol-banao-Ki-Thumari. The Bol-Bant-Ki-Thumari is expressly adapted for dance and its beauty lies in rhythmic variations and leap notes. This is sung for the dancer by one or more of the accompanists in fast or medium tempo while he or she does the abhinaya or acts out the emotional content of the song.

To give an example. There is *Koyalika Kook Sunaave* in Raga Khamach. It is divided into five parts for abhinaya. The first one is the refrain itself. The dancer imagines that a Cuckoo is perched on a tree and is warbling its two-fold notes and acts the idea out while dancing. The second part is, *Sakhire mohe viraha Sataave*. Here the pangs of separation from the lover is delineated by her. The third is *Piya bin Kachuna Sohavi* — nothing appeals to me without my lover, she says dejection overtakes her and is expressed in abhinaya. The fourth is *Nishi Andhiyaari kaari vijari chamakke* i.e., lightning is flashing in a dark night. The very notes to which the stance in set reflect the flash of lightning and expression accentuates it. The last *Jiyaraa Mora darpaaave* is also composed in such a way as to bring out the sense of fright, in melody and mime.

Rhythmic effect is the forte of this type of Thumari. It is for such music that Susan Langarhas said in her *Feeling and Form*, "Music makes time audible and its form and continuity sensible".

#### WORD-BASED COMPOSITION

Now to the *Bol-banao-ki-Thumari*. This is *banao* or *alapti* with the bol or word-

ings of the song. While the *Bol-bant-ki-Thumari* is sung in accompaniment to the dance, the *Bol-banao-ki-Thumari* is sung *after* a dance piece, but the abhinaya or acting is there. The *Bol-banao-Ki-Thumari* is sung in slow tempo. In *Bol-bant-Ki-Thumari*, the abhinaya continues throughout; in *Bol-banao-Ki-Thumari*, it is done towards the end when *Laggi* starts or the tempo is made a bit fast.

The Dhruvapada and Khayal are *svara-pradhana Gayaki* i.e., vocal music in which prominence is given to the *svara* or musical note and the *bol* or wording is secondary. Thumaris is *Bol-pradhana Gayaki* i.e., prominence is given to the *bol* or wording, and the musical notes are turned, twisted, moulded, modulated so as to bring out the emotional content of the song. The text or poetic quality of the song determines the melody. The devices used for the emotional expression are 'Jhatka', 'Khatka', 'Gitkiri', 'Meend', 'Dard' or 'Pukaar'. All this can be put in two simple words of Sangita-Shastra, viz., *gamakas* or subtle graces and *kaku* or modulation of voice.

Generally the thought-content of the song in this type of Thumari is supported by singing *Dohas*, *Sher*, *Kavita*, *Savaiya* etc., which have similar ideas. And emotional expression is its main characteristic.

The classicists and the high-brows however looked down upon Thumari, first, because it did not keep very much to the purity of the Raga, and secondly, because it involved dancing and acting. Even the Thumari singers who sing it today without any abhinaya sang it with gestures about 20 years ago. I

have myself witnessed the performance of Thumari by Shambhu Maharaj, Rasoolan Bai, and Siddheshwari Devi with full abhinaya.

#### MUSIC-ORIENTATION

The *Bol-bant-Ki-Thumari* has practically gone out of vogue, because its very composition was meant for dance, and without dance, it hardly leaves scope for elaboration. As for, *Bol-banao-Ki-Thumari*, the abhinaya that formed part of the concluding portion where *Laggi* started is now done away with. What remains now is *Laggi* bereft of the abhinaya.

The present style of singing Thumari was evolved by those great masters who were arrested by its inherent potentiality for emotional expression, but were averse to the abhinaya involved. They felt that if the notes were used with proper modulation, they would themselves communicate to the listeners the emotional content of the song, and so acting could easily be eschewed. Bhaiya Ganpat Rao, Shymalal Khatri, Muazzuddin Khan are some of the artists who gave this orientation to Thu-

mari. And that is how *Bol-banao-ki-Thumari* has survived.

As a matter of fact, this type of Thumari has blazed a new trail in our music. It emphasises emotional expression, and this style is used even in bhajan and instrumental music where it is called Thumari *ang se gana* or *bajan*.

#### ROMANTICISM

Thumari is a purely romantic style of music. Classical art lays emphasis on the beauty of form, romantic style lays stress on the beauty of contents, enhanced by suggestiveness and association. About which Prof. William James says in his *Principles of Psychology*: "Complex suggestiveness, the awakening of vistas of memory and association and the stirring of our flesh with picturesque mystery and gloom, make a work of art *romantic*. The classic taste brands these effects as coarse and tawdry, and prefers the naked beauty of the optical and auditory sensations, unadorned with frippery or foliage. To the romantic mind, on the contrary, the immediate beauty of these sensations seems dry and thin."





# LEARNING THE ART—THEN AND NOW

By

P. G. KRISHNAMOORTHY

The method of imparting lessons in Karnatak music has always left me wondering whether we have been going about it in 'right way', because, I have heard some old veterans often saying that we are not. I attended in 1967 a lecture-demonstration at Narda Gana Sabha, Karur by Sri V. V. Sadagopan, who felt that children could be first taught musical items like 'Kummi', 'Kolattam' and such type of group efforts to help them shed their shyness and start liking music. The structured lessons like 'Sarali Varisai' could be the second stage. He had tried this successfully. How far this is feasible and whether it should be started at the academic school stage or whether it should be done at the music school are questions which the music teachers are always concerned with. And this in turn leads to another question whether there is any 'right way' in the absolute sense or one has to qualify this by adding 'under the circumstances'? Perhaps a qualification of this type is warranted, because of the ever-changing social set-up, technology, way of life etc., and age-group of the students, the technique of teaching etc.

## MUSIC DOMINATES

Reminiscing over my attempts to learn Mridangam, I am able to discern the change that has come over in our system. In my small village in Palghat District, there was a tutor who used to teach the boys and, once in a while got

a chance to perform at concerts and dramas. Incidentally, in those days, dramas offered enough scope for classical musicians. The drama comprised then some popular compositions of Saint Tyagaraja, Arunachala Kavirayar, Papanasam Sivan besides those which were part of the script. Music was there before the curtain-rise, during the intervals and during the play. Songs were many, dialogue little, and actors expressed their emotions through songs. Many a time prominent players entered the stage singing a song often unconnected with the main theme of the play and there used to be 'musical dialogue' between them and the orchestra which consisted of a double harmonium (Pedal type) and a Mridangam. Occasions when the audience called "once more" were not rare. Music dominated over the drama.

When I was initiated, I was given a 'mridangam', a piece of Tamarind wood shaped like a Mridangam with a black circle in the middle of the right side to indicate the 'Karanai'. It was quite painful to produce some sound on it. But we did learn many of our "Paatakai" chollu on that piece of wood. Later, when we graduated to the stage of 'Thani Avarthanam' pattern, we were given the actual Mridangam in 'flesh and blood' or rather skin and straps. The art of applying 'rava' to the left side came much later. We were not allowed to play during even Bhajans until our tutor permitted. The reason, as

I understood subsequently, was that once the pupil started taking part in chorus singing as a percussionist, if the speed of his fingers was not adequate, during the 'Naamavali' singing he would be sacrificing clarity to keep up with the speed of the singers. Secondly, unless the pupil had his own firm sense of rhythm, and unless the Bhajan group had some background of classical music, the Mridangist would be pulled here and there and, over a period of time, he would lose even the basic 'layam'. On the contrary, when the teacher was satisfied with the steadiness of the student's rhythm and the standard of the singers, he used to encourage the student to participate in such programmes, as he would easily get the 'Trikaala' speed.

## RIGOROUS SADHAKA — A MUST

Daliy practice was a must and this was not necessarily always in the immediate presence of the teacher, although classes used to be in the front verandah of his house. The teacher would be attending to some other work, but if the student thought that he was not listening, he was in for a sudden jolt. For, any mistake in the chollu or jerk in the rhythm would be pointed out, not by words, but by a hard knock on the head or a cut, usually with the long handle of his 'visiri' (fan). We, the younger disciples, were treated somewhat differently. For the student who did well, there was always a word of appreciation, sometimes even a biscuit or peppermint.

Groups never used to consist of more than two or three. Often it was one student at a time and individual attention was paid. It was not just

asking you what you had in the last class and then giving you a new lesson. One had to play the old lessons selectively as directed by the teacher and then the new one would come which had to be practised for quite some time in the class until the teacher was convinced that the student had grasped it well. Sometimes, there would be no new lesson at all. Even when the teacher had to be away, the classes would continue. A senior disciple would be asked to watch our practising the old lessons. There were holidays only on Amavasya, Ashtami and festival days like Onam, Deepavali or Vishu.

In the early stages of our training, we were not allowed to listen to other performers or to try out any pattern other than what we were being taught, until we had firmed up in one particular style. Thereafter, either the teacher himself took us to concerts or encouraged us to listen to as many of the standard performers as possible. Accompanying vocalists or instrumentalists was also imbibed by us as a part of the lessons after we had attained sufficient proficiency.

## SCOPE FOR INDIVIDUALITY

One thing which I remember is that although basically the lessons taught to us were the same, our teacher had a knack of knowing the strong and weak spots of the students. Therefore, he made some changes in the lessons imparted to them in such a way that the weakness would be covered and strong points highlighted. For quite some time I was not aware of this. Once when I was practising at the teacher's house another student dropped in. The







The Suzuki method also calls for the parents to learn the fundamentals of music. That way they can help the child at home and understand the difficulties he or she might have.

Ann says : "We start off with the mother having a 15-minute lesson and the child a 10-minute lesson. Eventually this balance changes until the child takes the whole lesson.

"But the children usually outstrip their parents in no time at all. Show a child something ten times and they can pick it up, but with an adult it takes thousands."

Back at home, the mother and child recap what they have learned in the lesson, practising in short bursts.

#### AMAZING RESULTS

Proud mother Jenny Lera, whose 4-year-old son Christopher is already playing complicated pieces of music, says : "Christopher usually practises twice a day for about 15 minutes. It is hard work but he does enjoy it and I am amazed by what he can achieve."

And while Jenny and Christopher practise, nine-months-old baby Phillipa listens from her carry-cot, in preparation for her lessons that she will soon start.

Ann adds : "Children gradually build up a repertoire of songs, which they will never forget .... just like learning a language.

But some parents, Ann says, do come to her with the wrong idea, expecting their young son or daughter to be turn-

ed into a music prodigy. They soon learn however that little maestros are not what Suzuki is after.

#### A PHILOSOPHY

Ann explains : "They quickly find out that the Suzuki method is not just another piano teaching technique. It's a philosophy. It is the fulfilment and education of the whole child which is important.

"Dr. Suzuki is just as happy if one of his children becomes a successful judge or doctor, as if he becomes a musician.

"After all if you can discipline children to study music, they will be able to study well at school, too."

Every few weeks, the Suzuki children get together for a group session to play in an orchestra. The idea is that they will develop a greater self-confidence by playing in front of people.

But while the children are not expected to become great musicians, they are expected to reach a high standard. For, according to Suzuki, all children are happier when they are able to live up to high standards and gain self-respect.

#### STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE

Dr. Suzuki himself was the son of the owner of the world's biggest violin factory. But he did not learn to play the violin until he was much older when he took lessons in Berlin from musician Karl Klingler. It was then that he developed his own theory about playing.

He saw that the happy, relaxed and natural way of teaching a child to speak was the most successful educational process — and this was how music should be.

Today there are Suzuki teachers all over the world — with over 100 teachers in Britain alone.

Ann adds : "Of 100 children who are educated using traditional methods, about one-third drop out, but with Suzuki the rate is only five per cent.

"With Suzuki children, music stays with them forever and enriches their lives."

— Courtesy : Express Magazine, (Asia Features)

## SHANMUKHA

# *Felicitates & Greeto*

## THE LUMINARIES

**Shri Maharajapuram SANTHANAM**  
THE SANGEETHA KALANIDHI-ELECT  
OF THE MUSIC ACADEMY, MADRAS,

**Shri K. V. NARAYANASWAMY**  
Sangeetha Kalasikamani-designate  
of Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras

&

**Shri Kunnakkudi VAIDYANATHAN**  
Isai Perarignar to be of The Tamil Isai Sangam, Madras

and

*Wishes many more Awards & Titles  
in their Musical Career.*



# "ALAPANA FROM HANDOUTS?"

By

S. RAMACHANDRAN

(Continuing the Series we publish below observations on the topic from another angle)

The caption, "ALAPANA FROM HANDOUTS", indeed is a theme that sets one seriously think. Initially, I would point out that the very scheme runs counter to the originality and genius of Indian Music, which is known as Manodharma Sangita. To elaborate, Saint Tyagaraja, himself, had in his innovative genius introduced the plans of Sangathis to suggest the immense scope it inheres for the element of Manodharma to operate in Raga Alapana. In other words, it is originality in the pure sense of the term. Needless to repeat, that the soul of our music is its grand ambience of 'Raga' and its interpretation. If this aspect is left to parrot-like notational jottings for the student to decipher and render in a performance, it is obvious that 'originality' fast recedes. This scheme would imply further, that the whole thing turns out to be static, which, admittedly, is not the aim of MUSIC as an ART.

## RAGA ALAPANA

Raga Alapana is extemporisation on the part of the musician. The student's innate talent is the source. During the course of training at the hands of a teacher, rather Guru, several compositions in variegated ways of swara combination with due stress on certain characteristic 'Sancharas' are learnt and mastered by the student. The

equipment so prepared nurtures the young talent so as to blossom out into artistic efflorescence. This background, by no stretch of imagination, aims at spoon-fed reproduction. Instead, it is an exquisite combination of basic talent with well-channelised training which induces him to create and extemporise pouring out melody.

The student is always advised to listen to various concerts by different Vidwans. By listening to different concerts he learns to evaluate, emulate, exercise and evolve an individual idiom. It is this healthy backdrop that gives rise to the Alapana part of a Raga. If this be not there, the rendition may turn out to be one-track-oriented, insipid and even totally negative in connotation. Obviously, the student is recommended to do daily 'Sadhaka' so as to imaginatively articulate the melodic grace and gamakas in his Raga Alapana.

It would be conceded that the rendering of a composition is subject to rhythmic beats, segments and 'Eduppu' and so on which enforce a mandatory discipline, whereas Raga Alapana operates under a greater element of freedom. Within the permissible parameters, the singer creates musical images in characteristic intensity. It is this intensity that explains emotional

involvement. The end product is that melody handled purifies into something astral. In the highest degree of such an involvement, the musician even tends to experience the transcendental.

## EMOTIONAL THRILL

The said experience implied in Raga Alapana promises a *thrill* which the musician shares with his listeners, both the learned and lay. It is the language of emotions intelligible to all and not any particular intellectual group. Justifiably, Raga Alapana is the most difficult part in musical lessons. But then, it is pure ART which admittedly is earlier than SCIENCE. (Lakshya earlier than Lakshana). All the more is the reason that reproduction of notations through hand-outs should be treated as something 'forbidden'.

## LESSON PLAN

In the sequence, I would suggest teachers would do a suitable programming of their lesson plan so as to fulfil the need of an extempore improvisation of Raga Alapana by the students. Allotment in the manner of three or four consecutive days for delineation of a particular Raga should preferably be made. While attending to this, references to Prayogas and Sancharas available in different compositions should be made and driven home to students. Individual student should be given adequate attention, correction pointed out and finally a model essay evolved out.

As you go about with Alapana, only such 'Sangathis' as suited to the voice of the student should be attempted and practised. The practice of singing should imply essentially dwelling on 'swarasthanas' in lengthy Kaarvais, particularly at Shadja and Panchama

stages of the three octaves/sthayis Gamakas should be intensively practised, for, they are the embellishments that nurture the Raga muscle. Due importance should be given to 'Varisai' lessons in 'Chathurasra' Sarvalagu in deep-toned, resonant Akaara expressions produced from the lowest part of the vocal cavity. Particularly such a practice in 'mandara sthayi' enriches voice timbre. Vocal expressions in the manner of 'aa, om, ree, tha, na' are permitted and traditionally handed down. They are abbreviated forms of Hari, Om, Narayana, Anantha etc., which were the exclamations put to use by musicians, Rishis and Saints in their devotional music invocations.

One cannot lay down a rigid rule as to the teaching of Raga Alapana and grooming out the performer. The teacher/guru has to intuitively discover, understand the assimilating potential of the student and deal with individual cases on its merits. We do have a good ground-base of elementary lessons towards training of the voice and initiating the student for singing. Printed notations are put to use in the schools and to a certain extent are unavoidable. Yet, in the light of experience, this methodology is not that effective as reproduction as a result of the 'ear and rote' medium.

A disciplined mind and body coupled with consistent practice would help canvas new ideas for Raga Alapana. Our music is creative at every stage. Even in the recitative part of our music, it is creative to a degree, inasmuch as, we improvise 'sangathis' and the singer involves himself. Notations do impose a limitation which should be taken due note of. No Raga Alapana through 'hand-outs', please.



# IN-DEPTH VISION OF KAMALAMBA NAVAVARNAS

The difference between the two Melakarta Ragas, Sankarabharanam and Kalyani lies in only one swara, that is Madhyamam — so defines Musicology. Yet musicians can sing these Ragas, build up their image, bring out their individuality and picturise distinctly the majestic grandeur of the former and the euphonious grace of the latter without this note that differentiates them. Therein lies the uniqueness of our Raga system. The graces, microtones and the designs so devised with them produce flawless images. And the Kritis of the Karnatak Trinity abound in such salient characteristics which musicians relish in rendering while musicologists revel in analysing. But if one happens to be both, the pleasure is not only his. He can reach the lay rasikas with easy communication. And that is what Sri V. V. Srivatsa, the technocrat-musician-musicologist did in his dissertation of Muthuswamy Dikshitar's "Navavarna kritis" at the Bharatiya Music & Arts Society, Bombay. Though the Kritis have been analysed by musicians and musicologists a number of times, here was a 'live' exposition of the many philosophical, and esoteric truths. Both the afore-mentioned Ragas figure in the Navavarna series and bear testimony to the musical revelations.

The topic for the lec-dem was, "The Esoteric, Spiritual and Musicological Significance of the Kamalamba Navavarna Kritis" — quiet high-sounding and heavy at the outset. But as it turned out it became an emotional involvement, a musicological musing, and

above all a scientific analysis of this monumental edifice, illustrated with renditions by select students of Vidwan A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer, Principal of Bharatiya Music Institute.

It is generally believed that of the Trinity, Dikshitar was more catholic in his devotion, as no deity could be singled out as his Ishtadevata. "If any particular divine association is to be assigned to Dikshitar, it would be not a particular deity, but rather a particular temple, the Temple at Tiruvarur with all its indwelling divine presences", observes Harold S. Powers. However, that Dikshitar was a Devi-Upasaka and upheld the Shiva-Shakti theme has been established. Dikshitar combined the glory of Advaita and the tenets of Tantric Shastra. In the words of Srivatsa, "He undertook the truly challenging task of packing a host of important philosophical and esoteric concepts within the small framework of a Kritis. The profoundly learned scholar that he was, he succeeded by resorting to the aphoristic style of compositions."

Dikshitar expounds the concept of Sri Chakra in Kamalamba Navavarnas which comprise 9 Avarna Kritis and one each of Dhyana and Mangala compositions totalling 11. In practice the Gowla kriti, "Sri Mahaganapathi" and Suruti composition, "Balasubrahmanyam" are taught and sung before actually starting on Dhyana kriti, "Kamalambike" (Todi).

That symbolism plays a significant role in these compositions — Kamala

(lotus) in various manifestations — and that each Kritis carries a philosophic truth as well as musical munificence were well brought out in the lec-dem. Each Kritis is one step deeper into self-realisation, starting with meditation (dhyana) and gets intensified in melodic mood as the Kritis proceed.

The masterstroke of Dikshitar could be perceived in his choice of Ragas and pithy Swarakshara phrases and one is able to understand why Dikshitar chose 'Dwi-Swara Ragas' for this series. It was "indicative of Shiva-Shakti Bindu concept" besides reflecting his scheme of "duly infusing significant musicological content". If the Dhyana Kritis was composed in Todi, a popular Raga of simple Swaras, Mangala was enshrined in Sri Raga, a solemn mode. The opening phrase in Todi Ma-Ni-Ni-Dha, Srivatsa points out, makes Kamalamba Manini — Oh, Lofty .. Honourable .... Similarly, the Anandabhairavi kriti commences with Pa Pa Ma Ga Ga, notes denoting that sin (Papa) vanishes as the song is

sung, seeking refuge in Her. Kalyani followed immediately by the Kritis in Sankarabharanam also is illustrative of his masterstroke. Kambhoji, Bhairavi, Punnagavarali, Sahana, Ghanta and Ahiri are choices which exude solemn pathos and that fits in with the scheme when one's concentration is to reach the Bindu yielding to no temptation.

Each of the Navavarna kritis in itself is a monument in literary flourish, music, musicology and Shastra and thus elevating. And it is something to be rendered (with understanding) or listened to, and enjoyed, to be experienced and not analysed in mere words.

The lucidity of the lec-dem had an impact. The few fortunates who attended it were enlightened. And sure next time they rendered these Kritis some of the 'revelations' would flash in their mental vision and they could be emotionally involved in it.

R. S.

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Learning without thought is labour lost, thought without learning is perilous."

— Confucius

"If the meaning is known, why cling to the words, O fool! In the battle one who wins is the hero!"

— AKHO



15.10.89 "PAATTI AND THE NAUGHTY BOYS"  
(Story by Y. G. Mahendra)

16.10.89 "ITHU NYAYAMA SIR"  
(Written by Venkat)

Featuring : Y. G. Mahendra, Sudha Mahendra, Vandhana, Neelu & Others.

Direction : Y. G. Mahendra

17.10.89 Nrithya Choodamani  
Smt. CHITRA VISWESWARAN  
in Scintillating Solo-Dance-Drama  
"KRISHNANJALI"

MARINA'S RASIKA RANGA, MADRAS, PRESENTS  
SPECTACULAR TAMIL DRAMAS WITH SOCIAL THEMES

18.10.89 "ENGAMMA"

19.10.89 "NATHANAR KALAHAM"

20.10.89 "MAMANAR SARANAGATHI"  
Story & Direction : Marina

21.10.89 Madurai Shri T. N. SESHAGOPALAN — Vocal  
Mysore Shri M. NAGARAJ — Violin  
Mannargudi Shri A. EASWARAN — Mridangam

22.10.89 A RARE & UNIQUE APPEARANCE AFTER TWO DECADES  
Smt. VYJAYANTIMALA BALI, M.P.  
in Solo Bharata Natyam

NOVEMBER, 1989

11.11.89 Shri Maharajapuram SANTHANAM — Vocal  
Shri Nagai MURALIDHARAN — Violin  
Shri Vellore RAMABHADHAN — Mridangam

12.11.89 TO BE ANNOUNCED

## THEIR MUSIC AND THEIR LIVES

*Between Two Tanpuras* : Vamanrao H. Deshpande. Published by  
Popular Prakashan, Bombay. Price Rs. : 175.

This is a delightful collection of twelve articles on some of the musicians who have dominated the Hindustani classical scene over the last few decades. Some of them were the author's teacher — Sureshbabu Mane, Naththan Khan and Mogubai Kurdikar — while others were either his co-disciples (Kishori Tembe, Kumar Gandharva, B. R. Deodhar). The articles were originally written in Marathi and have been translated by Ram Deshmukh and B. R. Dhekney, but Deshpande obviously has a style which reads well even in translation, and what he has to say holds readers' interest.

The opening chapter on Sureshbabu Mane sets the mood, with an account that is as dispassionate in its artistic assessment (in spite of Deshpande's admiration for, and apprenticeship under, him) as it is racy in narration and highly diverting in terms of anecdotes. In the second paragraph itself, he gives this description of how he came to take lessons from Sureshbabu — "If you want to study with me," the teacher-to-be said, when Deshpande approached him, "you will have to wipe out everything you have learnt so far." The young Deshpande was taken aback, but with typical aplomb — and cheek — he said to the teacher, "Please let me hear you. Then alone can I make up my mind."

What hilarious impertinence ! And then, having heard the master and be-

come "instantly enslaved by his music", Deshpande declared himself agreeable, and asked, "What are your fees ?". "Five rupees per month and an entrance fee of one rupee at the start," Mane announced. And so the tuition began. At the end of the first month, as soon as he got hold of the money, Sureshbabu said, "Come, let us go to the picture." And proceeded to spend three and a half rupees (out of the five he had received for a month's teaching !) on *agarbatti*, and with the remaining sum bought two cinema tickets of twelve annas each.

The eleven pen portraits that follow are in the same vein spiced with both pathos and hilarity, truly typical of the lives of most great performing artistes; at the same time, the articles also include much by way of serious comments on the musical contribution of each artiste.

"From *sa* we proceeded painfully to *re* and *ga* and the rest of the octave in precisely the same manner," he says, evoking an ambience, ethos and time when learning was a different matter altogether, untouched by the crassness of the jet-age to come. He describes his own *Ganda bandhan* ceremony, with a touch of humour, and records how Alladiya Khan, a Muslim, recited, "Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu" while blessing the newly initiated disciple (and six decades later, today, we are still mouthing profundities about 'national integration' !).



Kumar Gandharva has been a long-time friend, and yet Deshpande does not hesitate to declare that "he played havoc with the traditional pattern" with his disjointed style of singing. Likewise, Kishori Amonkar's music is analysed with some very pertinent comments. What Deshpande offers are not biographies in the conventional sense but a judicious and eminently readable mixture of anecdotes, analysis and biographical details.

Writing about Professor Deodhar, he records how, just sixty years ago, with in living memory, those with education had to confront the question, 'Should music be accepted as a profession?' It is a measure of the tremendous changes that we have seen in these intervening years that today, this question is not even raised, with the same social relevance. He points out how Alladiya Khan's style was actually the result of a throat trouble that the Ustad had developed in the course of his career.

He also makes a couple of observations that merit serious thought — one, that too much emphasis on the power of the lyrics will detract from the melodic emphasis when one is performing classical music; in this sense, good poetry need not necessarily make good lyrics for classical singing. The other point is that all new experiments seeking to break away from the moulds of tradition take some twenty years to find acceptance. At every stage in the evolution of any classical art, every attempt at change has faced this problem of hostility and the charge of unacceptability, although change is a necessary condition for growth.

The collection includes articles on Bhaskarbua Bakhale (who taught stage music to Balgandharva) and Jagannathbua Purohit (who wrote compositions addressed to his teachers and disci-

ples, in the manner of conversations, and had *cheez-es* composed by them in turn, as replies !)

Deshpande is all for innovation that stands the tests of time and aesthetics; at the same time, he rightly insists that "there should be a class of artistes who should preserve art in its purest form" without injury to its "structural integrity". His poser, "Why must classicism always be at war with romanticism?" encapsulates his attitudes to the whole set of issues that he raises and discusses in the course of these articles.

At the end of these dozen pen portraits, what emerges (unintended by the author) is, along with details about these artistes, a personality portrait of Vamanrao Deshpande himself — uncompromising in his convictions but ever curious, willing to listen to points of view which are at variance with his own, and above all, passionately dedicated to the muse. The final chapter is, in fact, about himself — a candid assessment that is not boastful in the least, and is unpretentious without being overly self-effacing too. Advancing age notwithstanding, he is full of enthusiasm for ideas that will enrich, preserve and propagate the best that we are cultural heirs to. Here is hoping that he will write more, and give us the benefit of his opinions, and assessments.

The book includes a glossary of technical terms, and an extensive index, along with photographs of the artistes discussed between the covers. Deshpande and the translators need to be congratulated on this addition to our corpus of written records on classical music, the way it was, and the way it is changing.

Sakuntala Narasimhan

— Courtesy : *The Sunday Fress Press Journal*

## OBITUARY

### End of A Glorious Era

Cruel hands of death felled two titans of Hindustani music, one, a Sitarist of the Senia tradition, Ustad Mushtaq Ali, in July and the other, a doyen of Gwalior Gharana, Shri Krishnarao Shankar Pandit, in August. Both lived to a ripe age to have seen the golden age and the lean period. They had witnessed many an upsurge in the musical scene, the great expanse and the mushrooming of artistes and 'off-shoot' styles. Both were purists and uncompromising in their convictions. Whereas the Ustad Sitarist was 'left to lie in the dark' save the Sangeet Natak Academy's award, the Vocalist Pandit received awards and honours such as Tansen Samman, Sangeet Natak Akademy's award and Panma Bhushan. This however did not make Panditji happy for the fast changing scene in the artfield caused him much anguish.

The 'great expanse' and 'mushrooming of performing artistes' only reminded the Sitarist of 'shallow puddles left by heavy rains'. They were illusory and deceptive, resulting in the depth and devotion fading away, he commented.

May be scathing remarks they were, but they did reflect some untold hometruths about the atmosphere prevalent in the world of performing arts. And coming from a veteran who belonged to the Guru-Sishya parampara of the legendary Tansen, carrying the legacy of the Senia Gharana for the seventh generation, these could not be ignored either.

A veritable source-mine of authentic data on musical evolution Mushtaq Ali is said to have brought to light, against the conventional four *Drupad Vanis*, a fifth called 'Dhantvani' named after one of his forefathers, Nayak Dhundhu who adorned this court of Shahjahan.

A staunch exponent of Senia Gharana, the Ustad very much condemned the modernisation of the 'Sitarbaj' with addition of frets so as to better its manipulation. They 'killed' the deflection and meend. The extra frets, he bemoaned, so much simplified the playing that should the process continue it wouldn't be long before the Sitar ended up as an 'improvised Harmonium'.

It is no wonder that he had very few disciples, foremost among whom is Prof. Debu Chaudhary, the Head of the Department of Music, Delhi University.

As for disciples, Krishnarao Shankar Pandit was more fortunate. Fed on music from the cradle, as it were, he established a music institution when he was hardly twenty. Never swerving in his conviction of the superiority of the Gwalior Gharana which sustained on the eight-fold aesthetics, which he called 'ashtanga,' he lived as a "Pitamaha" and stood as a veritable column of support and sustaining force at a time when the Gharana had many off-shoots and was somewhat dissipated and overshadowed by new-found schools.



# பல்லவி மாமேதைகள்

By

ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி முடிகொண்டான் வெங்கடராமய்யர்

(சென்ற ஆண்டு ஷண்முகானந்தா சபா நடத்திய ஸங்கீத ஸிம்போஸியத்தில் பங்கெடுத்துக்கொண்ட திருமதி ஆர். வேதவல்லியை, அவர் ஆற்றும் ராகம்-தானம்-பல்லவி-சொற்பொழிவில், மறைந்த பல்லவி மாமேதைகளின் பாணிகளைப் பற்றி எடுத்துக் கூறும்படி நிர்வாகிகள் கேட்டுக் கொண்டனர். தான் நேர்முகமாகக் கேட்டறிய வாய்ப்பில்லாத ஒன்றைப் பற்றி தான் பேசுவது உசிதமில்லை என்று வினயத்துடன் மறுத்துவிட்டார்.

சிஷ்யையால் செய்ய இயலாததை குரு இட்டு நிரப்புகிறார் கீழ்க் கண்ட கட்டுரையில். ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி முடிகொண்டான் வெங்கடராமய்யர் இருபதாண்டுகளுக்கு முன் வரைந்த இக் கட்டுரை சங்கீத மாணவ மாணவிகளுக்கு ஒரு எடுத்துக்காட்டு. மட்டில்லா பொக்கிஷம்.

— ஆசிரியர்)

கர்நாடக சங்கீதக் கச்சேரிகளில் முக்கிய அம்சமாகக் கருதப்படுவது ராகம்-பல்லவியே. 1920 வரையில் ராகம்-பல்லவிக் கே முக்கியத்வம் கொடுத்து வித்வான்கள் பாடி வந்திருக்கிறார்கள். அதற்குப் பிறகு முக்கியத்வம் அளித்தாலும் பழைய அளவுக்கு இல்லை என்பது எனது அபிப்பிராயம். ஏற்கனவே ராகம்-பல்லவிக்கு சுமார் 2 மணி நேரம் எடுத்துக்கொண்டார்கள் என நினைக்கிறேன். கேட்பவர்களுக்குப் புரிகிறதோ இல்லையோ, நிசப்தமாக இருந்து, ரஸித்துத் துத்தான் கேட்டார்கள், 18, 19 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டுகளில் பல்லவி கோபாலய்யர், பல்லவி சேஷய்யர், பல்லவி துரைசாமி அய்யர், ஷட்கால கோவிந்த மாரார், ஷட்கால நரஸய்யா முதலிய மகாவித்வான்கள் பல்லவியில் தனித்திறமை அடைந்திருந்தார்கள் எனத் தெரிய வருகிறது. இவர்களில் சிலர் செய்திருக்கும் ஸாகித்தியங்களையோ வர்ணங்களையோ கவனித்தால் அவர்கள் பல்லவி எப்படி பாடி இருப்பார்கள் என ஊகிக்கலாம். விசேஷமாகச் சென்ற நூற்றாண்டிலும் வித்

வான்கள் இரண்டு களை சவுக்கத்தில் பல்லவியை அழகாகப் பாடி வந்திருக்கிறார்கள் என அறிகிறோம். ராக விஸ்தாரமும் பல்லவியில் நிரவலும், ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதும் நிரம்ப விசேஷமாக இருந்திருக்க வேண்டுமென அறிகிறோம்.

இப்போது இந்த 20 ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் சென்ற சங்கீதத் தலைமுறையில் ராகம்-பல்லவியை அபரிமிதமாகப் பாடிவந்த சில வித்வான்களைப் பற்றி, அதாவது நான் கேட்டவர்களைப் பற்றியே, இங்குச் சிறிது சுருக்கமாக எழுதுகிறேன். இது தவிர இன்னும் சிலர் இருந்திருக்கலாம். ஆயின் முக்கியமாகச் சிலரைப் பற்றி மாத்திரம், நான் கேட்டவரையிலும், ஞாபகம் உள்ளவரையிலும் எழுதுகிறேன்.

**நாமக்கல் நரஸிம்ம ஐயங்கார்**

இவருடைய பாட்டை கருரில் ஆண்டிப் பட்டி ஜமீன்தார் ஆதரவில் காயகசிகாமணி, சங்கீத கலாநிதி ஸ்ரீ முத்தையா பாகவதர் அவர்கள் ஏற்பாட்டிலும் வியாபகத்தில்

நடத்தி வந்த உற்சவத்தில் கேட்டிருக்கிறேன். இது 1916-17 ஆம் வருஷமாயிருக்கலாம். இவர் லய-கணிசமாகவும், நன்றாய் நிரவலும், ஸ்வரங்களைப் பிரஸ்தரித்தும் பொருத்தமாகவும், அழகாகவும் பாடுவார். முற்காலத்தில் ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதில் திசுரகதி செய்து பாடுபவர் மிகச் சிலரே. ஆனால் நரஸிம்ம ஐயங்கார் அவர்களே ஒவ்வொரு கச்சேரியிலும் திசுரகதியில் ஸ்வரம் பாடுவார். பல்லவியை அநேகமாக இரண்டுகளைச் சவுக்கத்திலும் பாடுவார்.

**கல்லிடைக்குறிச்சி வேதாந்த பாகவதர்**

இவருடையது ஒரு பெரிய பாட்டு பெரிய ஞானஸ்தர். ஸ்தாயியில் விசேஷமாக அதிக நேரம் பாடுவார். லயத்தில் உழைத்தவர். நான்கு களைச் சவுக்கத்தில் பல்லவி பாடி ஸ்வரம் நன்றாய்ப் பாடுவார். மான்-பூண்டியா பிள்ளை, தக்ஷிணமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை முதலிய லய வித்வான்களையும் சேர்த்துக் கொண்டு பல்லவியை ரொம்ப நன்றாய்ப் பாடுவார். காலப்பிரமாணம் வெகு சுத்தமாய் இருக்கும். கல்பனை வெகு அழகாய் இருக்கும்.

**மழவராயநேந்தல் சுப்பராம பாகவதர்**

இவர் சங்கீதத்துக்கென்று தனது ஜென்மாவை ஈடுபடுத்தியவர். பெரிய ஞானஸ்தர். ராகமோ, நிரவலோ, ஸ்வரமோ எல்லாவற்றையும் வெகு நேர்த்தியாகப் பாடுவார். சவுக்க காலப் பல்லவியில் பாடத் திறமை உள்ளவராய் இருந்தாலும் ஒரு சிறிய பல்லவியை எடுத்துக் கொண்டு பிரமாதமாய்ப் பாடிவிடுவார். அற்ப ராகங்களையும், அற்ப ராகங்களின் ஸ்வரத்தையும் விசேஷக் கற்பனையுடன் பாடுவார். மனோதர்மம் மிகுந்த பாட்டு. லய தாளங்களில் நன்றாய் உழைத்தவர்.

**காரைக்குடி வீணை சகோதரர்கள், ஸுப்பராமையர், ஸாம்பசிவ ஐயர்**

இரண்டு வீணைகளை சுருதி செய்து கொண்ட உடனேயே இவர்கள் கச்சேரி களை கட்டினும். இவர்களுக்கு விசேஷமாக தக்ஷிணமூர்த்தி பிள்ளையே மிருதங்கம் வாசிப்பார். சங்கீதத்தில் அளவு மீறிய உழைப்புள்ளவர்கள். பெரியவர் ஸுப்பராமையர் வீணையை ஊர்த்வ முகமாக வைத்துக் கொண்டு வாசிப்பார். பாட்டுப் பாதியும் வாசிப்புப் பாதியுமாக இருக்கும். சில சமயங்களில் அதிகமாகவே பாடுவார். அஸாத்யமான ஸாதகிகள், லய தாளங்களில் இவர்கள் உழைத்திருப்பதற்கு எல்லையே இல்லை. பரம ஸௌக்கியமாகவும் வாசிப்பார்கள். சகோதரர் இருவரும் மாற்றி மாற்றி வாசிப்பார்கள், ராகங்கள் உட்பட. இவர்கள் பல்லவியை இரண்டு, நான்கு, எட்டுக் களைகளிலும் வாசித்துக் கேட்டிருக்கிறேன். பிது சுருவும், ஒதுக்க சதுக்கமும் உள்ள சங்கீதம், அபாரமான மனோதர்மம். பெரியவர் ஸுப்பராமையர் பல்லவி வரும்போது நிரவல், ஸ்வரம் இவற்றை வீணையை வாசித்துக் கொண்டே வாயினாலும் அஸாத்தியமாகப் பாடுவார். தந்தியை ஐந்து ஸ்வரம் ஆறு ஸ்வரம் வரையில் இழுத்து வாசிப்பார்.

ஒரு சமயம் மைலாப்பூர் சங்கீத சபையில் தக்ஷிணமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை மிருதங்கத்துடன் இவர்கள் கச்சேரி நடந்தது. நான் இருந்து கேட்டுக் கொண்டிருந்தேன். இது சுமார் 30 வருஷத்துக்கு மேல் இருக்கும். அன்று தோடி ராகம் வெகு விஸ்தாரமாக வாசித்து 8 களை சவுக்கத்தில் 3, 4 இடத்தில் பல்லவி எடுத்து இருவரும் வாசித்து, பெரியவர் நடு நடுவே பாடியும் வந்தார். கடைசியாக இவ்வளவு சவுக்கப் பல்லவியில் ஸுப்பராமையர் அவர்கள் ஏழு, எட்டு ஆவர்த்தனங்கள் சேர்ந்தாற்போல் நிரவலும், சுமார் பத்து ஆவர்த்தனங்கள் சேர்ந்தாற்போல் ஸ்வர



கல்பனையும் பாடிவந்தார். இது பெரிய விஷயமல்லவா? இவ்வளவு சவுக்க காலத்தில் நிரவலும் ஸ்வரமும் இவ்வளவு ஆவர்த்தனங்கள் பாடுவதென்றால் நிரம்பப் பெரிய விஷயமல்லவா? ஸ்தலியர்கள் பிரமித்துப் போய்விட்டார்கள். சதலில் அநேகருக்குப் புரியாமலும் இருக்கலாம். இது கண்டு தஷிணமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை அவர்களும் ஸுப்ப ராமையர் அவர்களும் கண்ணாடை செய்து கொண்டு பல்லவியை உடனே முடித்துவிட்டார்கள். இவ்வளவு சவுக்கமாய் இருந்தாலும் அங்கங்கே தாளமீட்டில் லகு-த்ருத்திற்கு சுத்தமாக மீட்டு விழும். அவர்களுடைய பல்லவி ஞானத்தை நான் என்னென்று சொல்வேன்!

**ராமநாதபுரம் ஸ்ரீனிவாச ஐயங்கார் (பூச்சி ஐயங்கார்)**

ஸ்ரீனிவாச ஐயங்கார் அவர்களுக்கு நல்ல சாரீரம் உண்டு. ஒரு பூர்ண சந்திரிகாராகத்தில் முப்பது ஆவர்த்தனத்திற்கு மேல் ஸ்வரம் பாடுவார். அவ்வளவு கற்பனை உள்ளவர். லக்ஷணம் தெரிந்தவர். ராகத்தை நிரம்ப விஸ்தாரமாகப் பாடுவார். பல்லவி 2 களையிலோ, 4 களையிலோ எடுத்துக் கொள்வார். ராக பாவத்துடன் நிரவல் செய்வார். ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதும் ராக பாவத்துடன் இருக்கும். நிரவல் பாடும்போதும், ஸ்வரம் பாடும்போதும் எல்லோரும் தாளம் போடும்படியாக ஸர்வ சுலபமாகப் பாடுவார். ஸ்வர ப்ரஸ்தரிப்பு நன்றும் இருக்கும். கைத் தாளத்தைப் பிடுங்கும்படியான வழியில் பாடமாட்டார். சகல ஸம்ப்ரதாயமும் தெரிந்தவர். பெரிய வித்வான், வெகு ஸரஸி. ஆனால் விவகாரங்கள் எல்லாம் தெரியும், அதைப் பிரயோகிக்க மாட்டார்.

**கோனேரிராஜபுரம் வைத்தியனாத ஐயர்**

கோனேரிராஜபுரம் வைத்தியனாதய்யர் அவர்கள் பல்லவி பாடுவது பற்றி எழுதி

மானாது. இவர் சாரீரத்தில் எல்லா காலப்ர மாணமும் பேசும். ஸ்தாயி சாரீரம். சுருதி 4½ கட்டையாகும். க்ரமமாக உருப்புகளை நேர்முகமாக, வாய்ப்பாடமாகவே பாடம் செய்கிறவர். அதிபால்யத்திலிருந்து கஞ்சிராமான் பூண்டியா பிள்ளையுடன் வெகு நாள் சேர்ந்திருந்து லய தாளங்களில் நன்றாய் உழைத்தவர். கால் விரல் கூடத் தூக்கத்தில் கூடத் தாளம் போட்டுக்கொண்டே இருக்கு மாம். எப்போதும் முனகிக்கொண்டே நாதோ பாசனை செய்துகொண்டிருப்பார். ஸ்தாயியில் பாடும்போது குயில் கூவுவது போல் காதிற்ரு அவ்வளவு இன்பமாக இருக்கும். பாட்டில் பிசு-சுசு, கனம்-நயம், ஒதுக்கம், ஸ்வர சுத்தம், ச்ருதி சுத்தம், கமக சுத்தம் எல்லா வற்றையும் காணலாம். பாட்டில் அந்தத் த்வனி கொடுப்பதே ஒரு விசேஷமாக இருக்கும்.

இவர் 2, 4, 8 களை சவுக்கங்களில் பல்லவிகளை அசாதாரணமாகப் பாடுவார். பல்லவிக்கு சமயோசிதப்படி சவுக்கத்தை அமைத்துக் கொள்வார். ஒரு மாளவி ராகத்திற்கு ஸ்வரங்களை சரமாரியாகப் பாடுவார். நிரவலோ அழுத்தம் திருத்தமாகவும், லயப் பிடிப்பாகவும், ஏராளமான மனோதர்மத்து டனும் இருக்கும். திருச்சி கோவிந்தசாமிப் பிள்ளை பிடிவூடன் கச்சேரி செய்யும்போது இருவரும் போட்டா போட்டியாய் மனோதர் மத்தைச் செலுத்திக் கச்சேரி செய்வார்கள். பிரமிப்பே உண்டாகும். இவர் சாரீரத்தில் ஆகாத வேலை ஒன்றுமில்லை.

ஒரு சமயம் சென்னையில் கிருஷ்ண கான சபை என்று இயங்கிக் கொண்டிருந்த சபையில் தங்கசாலைத் தெரு, தொண்டை மண்டலம் உயர்நிலைப் பள்ளியில் இவருடைய கச்சேரி நடந்தது. ஸ்ரீ திருக்கோடிக் காவல் கிருஷ்ண அய்யர் அவர்கள் பிடிவூடன் தஷிணமூர்த்திப் பிள்ளை மிருதங்கம், மான் பூண்டியா பிள்ளை கஞ்சிரா, பழனி கிருஷ்

ணய்யர் கடம். ஏராளக் கூட்டம். ரஸிகர்கள் பலர். அப்போது ராகம் பாடிவிட்டுப் பல்லவியை 8 களை சவுக்கத்தில் எடுத்து வழக்கம் போல் 3, 4 இடம் இல்லாமல் வேறு இடத்தில் ஆரம்பித்துப் பாடிவந்தார். மான் பூண்டியா பிள்ளையும் இவரும் சேர்ந்துகொண்டு அமர்க்களப்படுத்தி வருகிறார்கள். அச்சமயம் ஸ்ரீ கிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்களுக்கு இது புதுமையாக இருந்தது. பிடிவைக் கீழே வைத்து விட்டு, "ஏ வைத்தா, இப்படித்தான் பல்லவி பாடுகிறதோ? ஒரு பர்லாங்குக்கு பர்லாங் கல்லை ஊன்றுவது போல் இருக்கிறதே நீ பல்லவி பாடும் காலப் பிரமாணம் என்று சதலிலேயே கேட்டாராம். பிறகு பல்லவி முடித்துவிட்டு இதர வகைகள் பாடி கச்சேரியை முடித்துவிட்டு கிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்களிடம் வைத்திய னாதையர் மன்னிப்பு கேட்டுக் கொண்டாராம். இது சுமார் 1907-8 ஆம் வருஷம் இருக்கும்.

இந்த விஷயம் கச்சேரி கேட்டவர்கள் எனக்குச் சொல்லித்தான் தெரியும். (நான் சிறு பிள்ளை. ஊரில் இருந்தேன்). பிறகு, ஸ்ரீ கிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்கள் பிடிவூடையே அடிக் கடி கோரிச் சேர்த்துக் கொண்டு பாடியிருக்கிறார், "அந்த மகானுபாவர் கிருஷ்ணய்யரால் எனக்குக் கொஞ்சம் சங்கீதம் வரும் என்று என்னிடமே வைத்தியனாதையர் பல முறை சொல்லியிருக்கிறார். கிருஷ்ணய்யரைக் குருவாக நினைத்துப் பிறகு பழகிவந்தார். ஒரு சமயம் திருவாரூரில் பூலோக கந்தர்வன் ரஹிமத்கான் பாட்டை வைத்திய னாதையர் அவர்கள் கேட்டுவிட்டு, "ரஹி மத்கான் தொண்டையில் அல்லவோ சங்கீ தத்தை வைத்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார். நாம் தொண்டையில் அல்லவோ சங்கீதத்தை வைத்துக்கொண்டிருக்கிறோம்!" என்று சொல்லியிருக்கிறார். கிருஷ்ணய்யர் உள்ளவரையில்

அவர் பிடிவூடையே ரேர்த்துக் கொண்டு பாடி உயர்ந்த சங்கீதத்தை அவர் பிடிவூடையே தெரிந்துகொண்டு வெகு ருசியாகவும், இனிமையாகவும் செளக்யமாகவும் ஒரு 12 வருட காலம் பாடி வந்தார். த்வனி கொடுப்பதிலும், சாரீர வசத்திற்கும் ரஹிமத்கான் வழியைக் கைக்கொண்டார். இவருடைய பாட்டு கோயம்புத்தூர் ராகவையருடைய வழி என்று சொல்லுவார்கள்.

**காஞ்சீபுரம் சுப்பிரமணியப் பிள்ளை (நாயனா பிள்ளை)**

கடைசியாக பல்லவிக்குப் பிரதான்யம் கொடுத்துப் பாடியவர் காஞ்சீபுரம் நாயனா என்னும் சுப்பிரமணியப் பிள்ளை. இவர் லய தாளங்களில் மிக மிக உழைத்தவர். கீர்த்தனைகளை ரொம்பவும் அழகாகவும் கேட்பவர்களுக்கு உணர்ச்சி உண்டாகும்படியாகவும் பாடுவார். இவர் கொன்னக்கோல் மன்னார்குடி பக்கிரியாப் பிள்ளையுடன் சேர்ந்து அநேகக் காரியங்களைப் பல்லவியில் சாதித்திருக்கிறார். மற்றவர்களைப் போல் ஆதி, ரூபகம், திருபுடை, இப்படி பல ஸர்வ சுலபமான தெரிந்த தாளங்களில் விசேஷமாகப் பல்லவி பாடுவதில்லை. அலங்கார தாளங்களான 35 தாளங்களில் நீண்ட தாளங்களில் ஒன்றை எடுத்துக் கொண்டு அதற்குத் தேவையான ஸாஹித்யங்களை அமைத்துக் கொண்டு பல்லவிகளைப் பாடுவார். இந்தத் தாளங்களையே சில சமயங்களில் திசீரகதியாகவும் அமைத்துக்கொண்டு அதில் பல்லவிகளை அமைத்துப் பாடுவார். கொன்னக்கோல் பக்கிரியாப் பிள்ளையும் இருவரும் சேர்ந்து ஒற்றுமைப் படுத்திக் கொண்டு கச்சேரி பிரமாதமாக நடக்கும். நாயனா பிள்ளை ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதும் கொன்னக்கோல் பக்கிரியாப் பிள்ளை கூடக் கொணுப்பித்து வருவதும் ஆச்சரியத்தை உண்டுபண்ணுவதோடு கேட்பவர்கள் கருத்தை வேறு இடம் செல்லவிடாது. பல்லவியை நான்கு ஆவர்த்தனம் பாடிவிட்டு



உடன் அனுலோம விலோமங்கள் செய்து பாடி, பிறகு ஸ்வரம் பாட ஆரம்பிப்பார். ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதில் கோர்வைகள் வைத்து தாளத்தில் நான்கு அல்லது எட்டு ஆவர்த்தனங்கள் முடிந்து, பிறகு பல்லவி இடத்திற்கு நாயனா பிள்ளையும் பக்கிரி பிள்ளையும் சேர்ந்து வந்துவிடும்போது ஸதஸ் அல்லோலகல்லோலப்படும். பல்லவி எடுத்துப் பாடும்போது தாளம் இன்னதென்று உடனே புரியாது. சிறிது நேரம் கழித்துத்தான் புரிந்துகொள்ள முடியும். இதற்குப் பல காரணங்கள் உண்டு. ஆக பல்லவியில் மிகத் தேர்ச்சிபெற்றுப் பாடியவர்களில் ஒருவர் நாயனா பிள்ளை.

தற்காலம் பல்லவி பாடுவதென்றால் அனுலோம விலோமத்தையே பிரதானமாக நினைத்து பல்லவி எடுத்தவுடன் நிரவல் மாதிரி ஏதோ கொஞ்சம் பாடிவிட்டு உடனே அனுலோம விலோமத்தைப் பாடி, பிறகு

ஸ்வரம் பாடி முடித்து விடுகிறார்கள். இந்த அனுலோம விலோமத்தை முந்தைய வித்வான்கள் முக்கியமாக எண்ணிப் பாடமாட்டார்கள். வெகு சில சமயங்களில் பாடுவார்கள், அல்லது கேட்டால் பாடுவார்கள். அவர்களுக்குத் தெரியாதது ஒன்றுமில்லை. அவர்கள் விசேஷமாக நிரவலையும் ஸ்வரப் பிரஸ்தரிப்பையும் மனோதர்மத்தையும் முக்கியமாகக் கருதி வெகு நேரம் பாடி பிறகு பல்லவியை மூன்று காலம் பாடிமுடிப்பார்கள். இதுதான் ஸம்பிரதாயம். வித்வான் புதுச்சேரி ரங்கசாமி அய்யர், புஷ்பவனமய்யர், நாகஸ்வரம் செம்பொன்னூர்கோயில் ராமசாமிப் பிள்ளை, சிதம்பரம் வைத்யனாத பிள்ளை இவர்களைப்பற்றியெல்லாம் பல்லவி சம்பந்தமாக எழுதலாம். ஆனால் சிலரைப்பற்றி மாதிரமே எழுதியிருக்கிறேன். முடிவாகப் பல்லவியில் அனுலோம விலோமத்தைக் காட்டிலும் நிரவலும் ஸ்வரம் பாடுவதும் தான் முக்கியமான அம்சங்களாகும் என்பதை வற்புறுத்த விரும்புகிறேன்.

நன்றி — சென்னை வித்வத் சபை

